

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05
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-----121438 091352Z /53
O 091315Z DEC 77
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3756
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LENINGRAD 1658

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (MONDALE, MRS. JOAN), UR
SUBJ: TRAVEL BY MRS. WALTER MONDALE TO LENINGRAD, DEC 7-8

1. SUMMARY: HEAVY-HANDED SOVIET EFFORTS TO CONVERT THE VICE PRESIDENT'S WIFE'S FIRST TRIP TO LENINGRAD INTO AN "OFFICIAL VISIT," AND STUBBORN REFUSAL TO TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER, LEFT A CERTAIN SOUR TASTE IN THE MOUTHS OF PARTICIPANTS ON BOTH SIDES. BUT SUBSTANTIVELY THE VISIT ENDED BY BEING (FROM THE CONSULATE'S VIEW POINT, AT LEAST) ESSENTIALLY WHAT MRS. MONDALE HAD ASKED FOR AND VERY ENJOYABLE. SOVIET PRESS TREATED VISIT AS THOUGH IT HAD BEEN OFFICIAL (SEPTTEL).
END SUMMARY.

2. WELCOMING SCENARIO AT AIRPORT WAS AS SOVIETS HAD PREDICTED. MRS. TAISIYA LYUTOVA, PRESIDENT, UNION OF FRIENDSHIP SOCIETIES, EXTENDED FORMAL INVITATION TO MRS. MONDALE TO STAY IN GUEST HOUSE AS GUEST OF PRESIDUM OF SUPREME SOVIET -- FORCING MRS. MONDALE TO MAKE PERSONAL GRACIOUS REFUSAL ON GROUNDS THAT OTHER ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE. WHEN DRIVING PAST MAYOR'S OFFICE, MRS. LYUTOVA PROPOSED VISIT ON MAYOR AND OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MARIINSKY PALACE. AND FOLLOWING DAY, KUBLITSKIY, CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT OF MAYOR'S OFFICE, TRIED TO ISSUE RENEWED INVITATION (SEE LENINGRAD 1655).
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3. VISIT TO MONUMENT TO DEFENDERS OF LENINGRAD WAS CLEARLY THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE OBJECTIVE FROM SOVIET SIDE. KUBLITSKIY RAISED ISSUE AGAIN WITH ME WHILE WAITING FOR ARRIVAL OF MRS. MONDALE AND I TOLD HIM I WOULD DISCUSS VISIT WITH MRS. MONDALE AND WE MIGHT ARRANGE STOP, ON HER INITIATIVE, EN ROUTE TO AIRPORT NEXT DAY. UNDETERRED, MRS. LYUTOVA

LAUNCHED INTO HEARTRENDERING RECITATION OF LENINGRAD'S SUFFERINGS AS WE APPROACHED MONUMENT, AND SOVIET CHAIKA SLOWED, WHILE MRS. LYUTOVA PROPOSED BRIEF STOP MADE BY "ALL PEOPLE OF GOODWILL" (HAPPILY NOT TRANSLATED BY CONSULATE'S INTERPRETER). MRS. MONDALE WAS PLACED IN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION AND GRACIOUSLY AGREED. (HAD I KNOWN AT TIME THAT MRS. MONDALE HAD A COLD, I WOULD HAVE INSISTED ON HEALTH GROUNDS THAT SHE NOT GET OUT OF CAR.) SOVIETS WERE SO CONFIDENT THAT THEIR MOUSE-TRAP PLAY WOULD WORK, THAT THEY HAD MUSEUM DIRECTOR STANDING WAITING IN COLD, ALONG WITH SOMEONE EAGER TO THRUST RED ROSES IN HER HAND AS SHE APPROACHED THE CENTRAL MONUMENT BESTREWN WITH FLOWERS. FACT THAT MRS. MONDALE DID NOT FEEL ABLE NEXT MORNING TO MAKE BRIEF TOUR OF CITY, AND WAS CLEARLY NOT FEELING WELL DURING TOUR OF HERMITAGE, SHOULD HAVE IMPRESSED MORE SENSITIVE PEOPLE WITH THE CLUB-FOOTED CHARACTER OF THEIR INSISTENCE. (NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT TO THEM.) BUT MANNER IN WHICH TWO BRIEF LENINGRAD PRAVDA REPORTS ON VISIT SINGLED OUT LAYING OF FLOWERS AT MONUMENT FOR COMMENT SUGGESTS THAT SOVIET SIDE FEELS CONTENT IT CAN REPORT TO MOSCOW THAT IT "FULFILLED ITS NORM."

4. HAPPILY, SOVIETS CAME THROUGH AT LAST MINUTE WITH VERY GOOLD CULTURAL PROGRAM. DR. PIOTROVSKIY, DIRECTOR OF THE HERMITAGE, WAS HIS USUAL GRACIOUS, SOLICITOUS SELF, PERSONALLY CONDUCTING A FORE-SHORTENED TOUR OF SCYTHIAN GOLD COLLECTION, IMPRESSIONISTS AND TWO LEONARDO DA VINCIS. DURING COFFEE IN HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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GOBELIN-LINED OFFICE, PIOTROVSKIY PRESENTED MRS. MONDALE WITH TWO BOOKS ON HERMITAGE, AND SHE RECIPROCATED WITH BOOK (FROM OUR USA COLLECTION).

5. IN RUSSIAN MUSEUM, RELATIVELY NEW DIRECTRESS, MRS. LARISA NOVOZHIOVA, ALSO PERSONALLY CONDUCTED MRS. MONDALE DURING A VERY PLEASANT TOUR OF ICONS AND 19TH CENTURY PAINTERS. THE VISIT CULMINATED IN AN EYE-AND-MIND BOGGLING PRESENTATION IN THE BASEMENT OF PATH-FINDING WORKS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY BY KANDINSKIY, CHAGAL, ROCHENKO, FILONOV, STEINBERG, POPOV, LEBEDEV, GONCHAROVA, BODKIN, ETC., BUT PARTICULARLY MALYEVICH. WHETHER ARRANGED SPECIALLY FOR MRS. MONDALE OR NOT, THE CANVASES WERE WELL DISPLAYED, HUNG FROM CEILING DIVIDERS CARRYING 8 -10 CANVASES ON EACH SIDE IN NO DISCERNIBLE ORDER, WITH JUST ENOUGH SPACE BETWEEN THE DIVIDERS TO APPRECIATE THE PAINTINGS. MALYEVICH HAD A COMPLETE ROOM DEVOTED TO HIS MORE REPRESENTATIONAL WORKS, SHADING OVER INTO THE SUPREMACIST PERIOD. THE PAINTINGS WERE DESCRIBED WITH KNOWLEDGE AND ENTHUSIASM BY A MUSEUM GUIDE AND MRS. NOVOZHIOVA CLAIMED THAT THEY WOULD BE HUNG IN THE NEW WING OF THE RUSSIAN MUSEUM WHICH IS IN THE PLANNING PHASE (SHADES OF TRETYAKOV GALLERY PREDICTIONS*). (THE ONLY CONCERN SHOWN DURING THE TOUR WAS OVER THE PHOTO-

GRAPHS TAKEN OF MRS. MONDALE VIEWING THE PAINTINGS. I ASSURED THE DIRECTOR THESE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE FOR MRS. MONDALE'S PERSONAL USE AND WOULD NOT BE EXPLOITED COMMERCIALY.)

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3757

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LENINGRAD 1658

6. PROBABLY THE HIGH POINT OF MRS. MONDALE'S STAY IN LENINGRAD WAS THE VISIT TO TWO POTTER-CERAMISTS ALEKSANDR AND NATALIA ZADORIN, A CHARMING COUPLE WITH AN ENCHANTING YOUNG DAUGHTER AND LARGE BROWN POODLE, LIVING IN A LARGE 6TH FLOOR STUDIO APARTMENT. THE WORK OF BOTH ZADORINS WAS OF VERY HIGH QUALITY, IMAGINATIVE AND AMUSING, WITH LIBERAL USE OF FACES PEERING OUT OF EVERYTHING FROM PISA-TYPE TOWERS TO REALISTIC PILLOWS. ALEKSANDR HAS DISPLAYED HIS WORK AT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS IN ITALY. MRS. MONDALE AND MRS. ABELL WERE EACH GIVEN A RATHER COMICAL MUG AS PRESENTS, AND THE VISIT ENDED WITH EVERYONE SITTING AROUND A TABLE DRINKING COFFEE AND COGNAC OUT OF ASSORTED CHINAWARE--A VERY NICE PERSONAL TOUCH ON WHICH TO END WHAT BEGAN AS A HIGHLY BUREAUCRATIC VISIT.

7. BUT TO KEEP MATTERS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE, AS MRS. MONDALE AND PARTY FLEW TO FINLAND, MR. KUBLITSKIH COMPLAINED TO ME THAT MY LAST LETTER (WHICH I CONSIDERED FIRM BUT GRACIOUS) TURNING DOWN THE SOVIET OFFER TO MRS. MONDALE TO BE THEIR GUEST HAD MADE A VERY BAD IMPRESSION ON THE MAYOR'S OFFICE AND IN MOSCOW. TO WHICH I REPLIED, THAT THE CONTINUOUS SOVIET PRESSURE ON MRS. MONDALE TO VISIT ON SOVIET TERMS HAD MADE AN EQUALLY BAD IMPRESSION ON US, BUT I THOUGHT THAT WHEN WE BOTH COULD LOOK AT THE VISIT MORE OBJECTIVELY, WE WOULD SEE THAT IT HAD BEEN A SUCCESSFUL ONE. AND THIS IS,

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OUR JUDGMENT. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT HAD MRS. MONDALE
AND PARTY NOT BEEN SUCH GOOD SPORTS.BUCHANAN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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